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BROADCASTING
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Back to basics

EDITOR: That was an interesting pairing of First Amendment editorials in the July 15 issue.

In both, however, I think that something was missing that explains much about why groups as divergent as the CIA and the Parents Music Resource Center are pressuring radio and television broadcasters. The first is cajoling a national network to act like professionals, and the second is persuading radio stations to exercise some modicum of taste in the selection of rock music.

Inherent, I think, in the complaints of the CIA and the Parent's Center is the very valid notion that broadcasters have abandoned their own principles and the trust that the public had come to place in them.

Any reasonable person would be justified in expressing outrage with those responsible if, for instance, *Time* magazine included a *Penthouse*-type centerfold in its next issue or if BROADCASTING published a demonstrably false story that it refused to retract or to correct.

Clearly, the actions of both magazines would be protected by the First Amendment. But, just as clearly, both would have done great harm to their readers and to their own reputations if, in these cases, either chose to exercise its full First Amendment rights.

What then are broadcasters saying when they play raunchy music lyrics or present dubiously researched news reports? That they have no standards? Or that their standards are much lower than the public's expectations?—*David Crook*, Los Angeles Times.